

Message Text

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FM AMCONSUL ST JOHNS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1306

INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

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E.O. 11652 N/A

TAGS MARR CA

SUBJECT PROVINCE SEEKING CONTROL OVER PORTION OF
ARGENTIA NAVAL BASE

1. NEWFOUNDLAND MINISTER OF INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT JOHN LUNDRIGAN AND OTHER PROVINCIAL OFFICIALS MADE FLYING VISIT ON SHORT NOTICE TO US NAVAL FACILITY AT ARGENTIA, NEWFOUNDLAND, A FEW DAYS AGO. CO OF US NAVFAC WAS GIVEN ONLY A FEW HOURS NOTICE OF VISIT, PURPOSE OF WHICH WAS TO INSPECT THE UNUSED NORTH SIDE OF THE BASE WHICH IS AVAILABLE FOR PRIVATE INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT. WHEN QUERIED BY CO WHY I HAD NOT BEEN FOREWARNED OF VISIT, LUNDRIGAN CONFESSED HE HAD BEEN REMISS AND EXPLAINED THAT VISIT WAS PRETTY MUCH ARRANGED ON SPUR-OF-THE-MOMENT.

2. EVENING TELEGRAM ARTICLE ON 12/22/75 REPORTED INTERVIEW WITH LUNDRIGAN IN WHICH HE MADE STATEMENTS WHICH COULD BE CONSTRUED AS AT LEAST SLIGHTLY CRITICAL OF USG S ADMINISTRATION OF THAT PORTION OF BASE OPEN TO DEVELOPMENT. HE QUOTED AS SAYING "IT IS MY FEELING THAT THE AMERICANS ARE NO LONGER INTERESTED IN DEALING WITH PRIVATE COMPANIES WHO MAY WISH TO UTILIZE THE FACILITIES AND THE AREA SO IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT WE GET A NEWFOUNDLAND ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE THAT COULD NEGOTIATE WITH PRIVATE COMPANIES."

3. I PHONED LUNDRIGAN TO DISCUSS ARTICLE WHICH HE SAID HE
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HAD NOT READ. WHEN I READ HIM PORTION, HE SAID HE HAD

PHRASED REMARKS BADLY AND THAT WHAT HE MEANT WAS THE USG UNDERSTANDABLY WAS NOT INTERESTED IN DEALING WITH AND INVESTIGATING EVERY OWNER OF A POPSICLE STAND WHO WANTED TO START UP OPERATIONS ON ARGENTIA S NORTH SIDE. RATHER THAN EXHAUST USG S PATIENCE IN DEALING WITH PENNY ANTE OPERATORS, THERE SHOULD BE A PROVINCIAL BODY EMPOWERED TO ACCEPT COMPANY APPLICATIONS AND TO DETERMINE SUITABILITY AND ACCEPTABILITY. ACCORDING TO LUNDRIGAN, GOC HAS AGREED TO PERMIT PROVINCE TO EXERCISE JURISDICTION AND ANNOUNCEMENT TO THIS EFFECT CAN BE EXPECTED WITHIN SIX WEEKS. IT IS BELIEVED DESIRABLE, HOWEVER, FROM LOCAL POINT OF VIEW TO OBTAIN BETTER TERMS FROM USG ON REVERSION OF NORTH SIDE PROPERTIES TO USG CONTROL IN EVENT OF EMERGENCIES.

4. PROVINCE INTENDS SOME FURTHER DISCUSSIONS WITH EXTAFF WITHIN NEXT COUPLE OF WEEKS AND WILL SEEK EXTAFF S ASSISTANCE IN OBTAINING USG CONCESSIONS. LUNDRIGAN WAS VAGUE ON EXACTLY WHAT TERMS HE MAY SEEK FROM USG BUT INDICATED HE WOULD BE IN TOUCH WITH ME WITHIN A FEW WEEKS FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION.

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